



QUARTERLY NEWS

THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

King County amendments to the International Building Codes were approved by the Metropolitan King County Council on May 24, 2004. The new Codes, along with King County amendments, go into effect on July 1, 2004. All permit applications submitted to DDES on or after July 1 must be in accordance with the new codes. Listed below are the most notable design requirements for residential development, as well as the resources available for in-depth training on the new Codes.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Single family dwellings no more than three stories in height, as well as their accessory structures, are regulated under the International Residential Code (IRC). Single family dwellings of four stories or more are regulated under the International Building Code and must be constructed with fire sprinkler systems.
- Accessory structures such as tool or storage sheds and playhouses of 200 square feet or less do not

require a building permit. (This is not true for carports or garages, which always require permits.)

- The rise and run of stairs changes to 7" and 10", respectively. For most projects, this results in an additional step.
- Only one exit is required from a single family residence. A second means of egress is no longer required from a third floor.
- Design criteria for wind and seismic and snow loads are now located in Table R301.2(1) of the IRC.
- The walls between a garage and a main dwelling need only to be covered with 1/2-inch gypsum wallboard. (previously 5/8-inch wallboard was required).
- The door between a garage and a main dwelling no longer needs to be self-closing.
- Foundation footing sizes have changed and vary, based upon site elevation (see Table R403.1 in the IRC).
- Rebar requirements in foundations have changed.

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CODE TRAINING:

The following organizations offer training on the new International Building Codes:

- Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties: 425-451-7920, or via the web at www.mba-ks.com.
- Washington Association of Building Officials: 360-586-6725, or via the web at www.wabo.org.
- International Code Council: 800-284-4406, or via the web at www.iccsafe.org.

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THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE

ALLOWABLE AREA, HEIGHT AND STORIES

One of the most notable and advantageous changes under the International Building Code (IBC) is a comprehensive change in the allowable area of buildings and their maximum height and stories. These changes can be found in Chapter 5 of the IBC and typically increase the base allowable area.

Under the IBC, size and height limits are a function of their occupancy use and the type of construction employed. Construction types are designated according to their fire resistance and have traditionally been specified as a type I, II, III, IV or V construction. These different types of construction are carried over to the IBC. However, the sub-type of construction has been revised to: non-rated (N), 1-hour rating (1-hr) or fire-resistive rating (FR) to either a type A or B classification. Most houses were classified as construction type V-N under the Uniform Building Code; under the IBC that classification is now a VB.

Chapter 5 of the IBC contains the primary regulations governing building areas and buildings heights. IBC Table 503 provides the base allowable areas. A comparison of these areas with the UBC will confirm significant increases. For example, a typical school (an E occupancy classification) of unprotected wood construction (construction type VB), has increased from 8,000 sq. ft to 9,500 sq. ft. of allowable area. Further comparisons will yield either increased or equal allowable areas.

A careful reading of the details in IBC Chapter 5 will show further allowances not previously recognized in the UBC. For example, area increases based on adjacent open yards now provides a more realistic approach to actual site conditions. Building areas are allowed to be increased based on their percentage of open yard perimeter around the building, rather than attempting to define a building according to whether it has two, three or four fully open yards as required in the UBC. Also, the UBC allowed buildings areas and heights/stories to be increased with the addition of an automatic sprinkler system. However, the UBC did not allow any two of these increases together. This limitation is eliminated under the IBC, so that a sprinkler system can be used to increase both the allowable area and building heights/stories.

Design professionals are likely to find that the product of these code changes will often allow for alternative types of building construction. Building areas, heights and stories may be more easily increased to allow for programmatic design needs. Since these are new requirements involving complex construction and design decisions, it is essential that the design professional review application of these provisions with the DDES Building Plan Review section during the DDES pre-application process.

For additional information, please contact Chris Ricketts, DDES Building Official, at 206-296-6750.

THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION, CONTINUED

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- American Institute of Architects – Seattle: 206-448-4938, or via the web at www.aiaseattle.org.
- Structural Engineers Association of Washington: 206-682-6026, or via the web at www.seaw.org.
- Building Industry Association of Washington: 360-352-7800, or via the web at biaw.com.

PURCHASING THE NEW CODES:

Copies of the new International Codes can be purchased from:

- Washington Association of Building Officials: 360- 586-6725, or via the web at www.wabo.org.
- International Code Council: 800-284-4406, or via the web at www.iccsafe.org.

For additional information on the International Building Code as it applies to DDES permitting procedures, please contact Ken Dinsmore, at 206-296-7089.

GEOLOGIST HELPS WITH KING COUNTY PERMITS

This article reprinted from the April 14, 2004 edition of the Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber

Greg Wessel used to travel all over the world in search of oil, gold and potash. Now he's a King County employee fielding questions about what Islanders have in their back yards.

"A lot of it is general residential permitting questions. 'What if I did this without a permit?' kinds of questions," he said during a lunch break at the Vashon Courthouse, where he works every Tuesday.

Wessel has been with the Land Use Services Division of the Department of Development and Environmental Services for six years in Renton. When he moved to Vashon recently, he offered to serve Islanders on Tuesdays in an effort to improve Islanders' access to information on land-use concerns.

On a recent Tuesday he fielded questions and permit applications from 14 people before noon. In addition to taking applications for building permits, he also hears concerns about illegal activities that neighbors often report.

Someone reported illegal grading activity on the north end and Wessel planned to check it out before the end of the day. But he's not the enforcement officer so he has to pass on such questions to the appropriate person in DDES.

"And I don't try to answer questions I can't," he said. He may refer people to engineers for some questions and he knows others in King County who might be able to answer other questions.

But he says he can help people navigate the permit process, tell them what they might need to do to get a permit for a garage or addition or remodel or show them maps that reveal how properties are covered in a new Critical Areas Ordinance that is in the works.

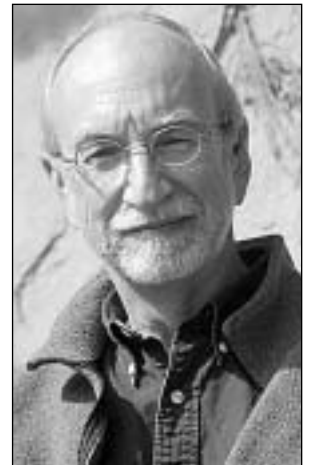
Wessel notes that the new rules probably will be tougher in terms of some setbacks and buffers. Scientists are discovering that the setbacks that had been required near streams and in sensitive areas aren't accomplishing what regulators had hoped in terms of solving environmental problems.

He also can check out properties in person for specific issues. When he does that, his time may be billed to the property owner.

Appointments for a visit at the Courthouse on Tuesdays are not necessary. He sees people on a first-come, first-serve basis and it's up to those who arrive to determine who is first. Recently, he had five people waiting for him when the doors opened at 8 a.m.

Although there are maps on the courthouse wall showing which areas of Vashon have had landslides or are susceptible to erosion, Wessel says the maps are not as helpful as taking a look at the property in person. Because he's looked at a lot of properties, the geologist says he can remember areas well.

Wessel says if people come to the county before they start building or grading, he can often tell them the problems they might encounter and how to solve the problems upfront.



Greg Wessel of the DDES Critical Areas Section.

He notes that when people cut down trees along sensitive areas, they may be required to plant three trees to replace the one that had been cut.

Wessel notes that Vashon has the only marine shoreline in unincorporated King County, which makes the Island unique in terms of permitting.

He notes that he's only come upon two homes built without permits. One was a house on the shoreline with a bulkhead built on the south end of Maury Island.

Although Wessel says most geologists go into the profession to get away from people — he's been to Russia, Bolivia and Texas, he likes to joke — he says he has been enjoying his work with the county and people.

"I would like to help educate as many people as possible as cost effectively as possible to help make projects code-compliant," he said.

CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS COMING TO DDES

AUTOMATED SCHEDULING FOR BUILDING AND FIRE INSPECTIONS: DDES is implementing Voice Permits, an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that will provide automated scheduling for building and fire inspections services.

Once Voice Permits is activated, builders and contractors will be able to schedule building inspections and also secure inspection results 24 hours per day. Voice Permits will also allow DDES building and fire inspection staff to post some or all inspection results through a cellular telephone from the field. This will include leaving contractors special messages related to inspection findings.

DDES will be installing and testing the Voice Permits system in July, 2004 with a (go live) target of August, 2004.

For additional information, please contact Mike Dykeman, Interim Building Services Division Director at 206-296-6761.

BUSINESS LICENSE APPLICATIONS OVER THE INTERNET: DDES staff are currently developing web-based systems allowing customers to apply for business licenses on line. Business licenses for secondhand dealers can now be applied for via the **DDES Web page at www.metrokc.gov/ddes**. This service will gradually become available for other business licenses issued by DDES over the course of this summer.

For additional information, please contact Michael Pahl, DDES Information Services Supervisor at 206-296-6706.

INTERIM PERMITTING PROCEDURES FOR AGRICULTURAL DITCH MAINTENANCE:

Under the proposed Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), King County clearing and grading permits will not be required for agricultural ditch maintenance conducted on properties with an approved Farm Management Plan. However, the ordinance is not expected to complete the Council review phase until the end of 2004.

Consequently, King County announces interim permitting procedures making it easier and less expensive for



King County has implemented interim permit procedures making it easier and less expensive for farmers to clean their ditches.

farmers to clean their agricultural ditches. The interim procedures will apply to those permit applications already filed with King County. This process involves a cooperative partnership between King County and the King Conservation District (KCD).

The interim efficiencies include:

- The Department of Development and Environmental Services will issue grading permits for ditch maintenance within five business days of a complete application submittal;
- The Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) will provide state and county application materials to property owners, as well as no-cost technical assistance to ensure that application materials are complete and accurate; and
- Site inspections will be conducted by KCD or DNRP, in order to save farmers the cost of DDES inspections that are billed hourly.

These interim measures are designed to minimize permitting costs and ensure that duplicative reviews are not being required among the various agencies. **For additional information, please contact Randy Sandin at DDES at 206-296-6778, or Jerry Balcom at the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks at 206-205-5668.**

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KING COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL URGES CAUTION DURING SUMMER MONTHS

The King County Fire Marshal's Office, located within the Department of Development and Environmental Services, recommends the following safety practices during hot summer months when the fire danger is particularly high.

FIREWORKS REGULATIONS: Make sure you know the regulations in your local area before discharging any fireworks. For a complete summary of fireworks regulations by jurisdiction, safety practices and locations for fireworks displays, simply log onto the **DDES web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes** and click on *Fire Marshal's Office*. Remember that children should always be closely supervised when fireworks are being discharged.

OUTDOOR COOKING: When barbecuing, never throw any type of flammable liquid on hot coals or flames. When your outdoor event comes to a close, make sure that all barbecues and/or open fires are properly extinguished and cold before leaving the area. Always make sure ashes are cold and wet before disposing, and never store ashes inside any structure, even if they appear cold.

CLEARANCE: Keeping flammable vegetation and brush cleared from buildings has proven to be one of the most important factors in preventing building/structural damage during wild fires. This simple tactic provides a defensible space, enables fire-

fighters or residents to safely lay hose lines, and reduces the intensity of radiated heat.

FIRE RESISTANT PLANTS: Replace dry, dead brush with fire resistant plants such as Algerian Ivy, Sunrose, Carmel Creeper, or Ice Plant.

LANDSCAPING: Landscaping should be free of dead or dry vegetation.

TRIMMING: Remove branches from trees to a height of 15 feet to prevent ground fire from spreading to the tops of trees.

ACCESS ROUTES: Private roads should be carefully maintained and addresses clearly posted at driveway entrances.

BURNING: A permit is required to burn natural vegetation. Contact your local fire department for permits and regulation.

Please keep in mind that some preventative measures, such as tree cutting, may require a clearing permit from DDES. **For additional details on clearing permits, please contact Site Development Services Supervisor Randy Sandin at 206-296-6778. For additional details on fire prevention, please contact King County Fire Marshal Jim Rankin at 206-296-7071.**

CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS COMING TO DDES, CONTINUED

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DEMONSTRATION GARDENS: Customers will soon notice some colorful changes in the landscape at the main DDES office in Renton. Staff from DDES and the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks are partnering to create a Sustainable Demonstration Garden. The purpose of the Demonstration Garden is to educate customers about sustainable planting practices, the use of native plants, and their benefit to the environment.

The Demonstration Garden will include three separate plantings: drought tolerant plants, shade plants, and wetland plants (rain garden). The Drought Tolerant Garden will be installed in June, and the Shade and Rain Gardens will be installed in October.

The Demonstration Gardens will be funded by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

For questions or additional information, please contact Cynthia Moffitt in the DDES Director's Office at 206-296-7095.

QUESTIONS – JUST ASK US

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Fire Marshal

(inspections, fire investigations, fire system permits)

Jim Rankin206-296-7071

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Jim Sanders206-296-7178

Current Planning Supervisor

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Greg Borba206-296-7118

Site Development Services Supervisor

(clearing, grading and forestry permits)

Randy Sandin206-296-6778

Critical Areas Supervisor

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Steve Bottheim206-296-7144

Land Use Inspections Supervisor

(site infrastructure)

Steve Townsend206-296-7204

Code Enforcement Supervisor

(building, environmental and health hazard complaints)

Elizabeth Deraitus206-296-7090

CUSTOMER SERVICE NUMBERS

DDES Customer Information Line206-296-6600

Permit Application Appointments206-296-6797

DDES Billing Hot Line206-296-6659



King County

Department of Development and Environmental Services

QUARTERLY NEWS

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This information is available on request in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 206-684-2046 (voice) or 206-689-4665 (TTY).